

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: MASS, GR, US

SUBJECT: PRESS SPECULATION ON RESUMPTION OF U.S. GRANT
MILITARY AID TO GREECE AND PARLIAMENTARY QUERY

1. SUMMARY: ATHENS NEWSPAPERS JANUARY 22-23 SPECULATED THAT GOG EXPLORING QUESTION OF RESUMPTION OF GRANT U.S. MILITARY AID LINKING SUCH RESUMPTION TO ISSUES OF BILATERAL REVIEW OF STATUS OF AMERICAN BASES, ANTI-AMERICANISM, MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY INTERESTS, AND "COMMUNIST ACTIVITY" IN GREECE. PRESS ARITCLES CITED "NEWSPAPER CIRCLES" AND NOT GOG OFFICIALS AS SOURCE OF INFORMATION ADN REPORTED THAT BOTH GREEK AND AMERICAN AUTHORITIES HAVE MADE NO COMMENT. CU/NF DEPUTY KONIOTAKIS TALBE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION REGARDING RESUMPTION OF U.S. GRANT MILITARY AID BUT REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF DISCUSSION UNTIL HE COULD ASSEMBLE MORE DATA. MINDEF AVEROFF AGREED TO POSTPONEMENT. EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER HAS NOT COMMENTED ON PRESS REPORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ELETHEROS COSMOS (CONSERVATIVE) FIRST SPECULATED ON
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AID QUESTION IN JANURY 22 ARTICLE CAPTIONED "AMERICAN

AID TO GREECE IS BEING REEXAMINED." ARTICLE NOTED THAT GREECE REQUESTED RESUMPTION OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE "SOMETIME AGO" AND MATTER IS BEING EXAMINED CAREFULLY IN WASHINGTON. ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT RESUMPTION OF U.S. MILITARY GRANT AID APPEARS RELATED, ACCORDING TO "POLITICAL OBSERVERS," TO GOG'S HANDLING QUESTION OF AMERICAN BASES IN GREECE, GREECE'S STRATEGIC LOCATION AS RELATED TO MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY, ANTI-AMERICANISM AND INTENSE COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN GREECE. ELEFTHEROS COSMOS ANTICIPATED THAT BILATERAL TALKS ON U.S. BASES ARE EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN EARLY FEBRUARY WHEN USG REPRESENTATIVES FROM STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENTS WILL VISIT ATHENS. IT CLAIMED THAT DURING THESE TALKS DIRECT REFERENCE WILL BE MADE TO RESUMPTION OF GRANT AID. ARTICLE CONJECTURES THAT GIVEN U.S. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING U.S. MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN SENSITIVE, STRATEGIC POSITIONS IN MEDITERRANEAN, USG WILL INSIST "ON MAINTAINING EXISTING SITUATION IN GREECE." COSMOS CONCLUDED BY POINTING OUT THAT RECENT TRIPS OF AMBASSADOR KUBISCH TO WASHINGTON AND VISITS TO ATHENS OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN ARE NOT UNRELATED TO ISSUE.

3. FOLLOWING DAY KATHIMERINI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOG) FRONT-PAGED ARTICLE UNDER HEADLINE "RESUMPTION OF AMERICAN GRANT MILITARY AID TO GREECE." ARTICLE CHARACTERIZED BILATERAL CONTACTS AS UNOFFICIAL AND NOTED THAT GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO MILITARY WING AND GREECE'S DECISION TO REVIEW STATUS OF AMERICAN BASES WERE RELATED ISSUES. KATHIMERINI THEN QUOTED FROM STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT BY OPPOSITION DEPUTY CONSTANTINE KONIOTAKIS (CU/NFL) ON THIS SUBJECT. KONIOTAKIS REFERRED TO U.S. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES PROGRAM AND CLAIMED THAT, WHEREAS TURKEY HAD RECEIVED FAR MORE MILITARY MATERIEL THAN GREECE, GREECE HAD A DEBIT OF \$435 MILLION WHILE TURKEY ONLY OWED \$17 MILLION UNDER THIS PROGRAM. HE ADDED THAT HE CONSIDERED THAT ADOPTION OF PROPOSAL BY LIBERAL AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN FOR TRANSFER OF THIS GREEK DEBT FROM LOAN PROGRAM TO GRANT AID WOULD BE IMPORTANT STEP ALTERING US'S BIASED POLICY TO ONE OF EQUAL TREATMENT FOR BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY.

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4. KONIOTAKIS THEN ASKED MINISTER OF DEFENSE WHETHER GOG PLANNED TO SEEK RESUMPTION OF GRANT U.S. MILITARY AID. HOWEVER, HE SUBSEQUENTLY REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF DISCUSSION UNTIL HE COULD ASSEMBLE ADDITIONAL DATA. MINDEF AVEROFF AGREED TO POSTPONE QUESTION "WHICH WE WILL DISCUSS SHORTLY." KONIOTAKIS MADE POINT THAT SINCE U.S. GRANT AID TERMINATED AT GOG INITIATIVE, GOG WOULD HAVE TO SEEK ITS RESUMPTION WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT

IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT CAME FROM ESTIA (ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE)
WHICH AGREED THAT RESUMPTION OF U.S.

GRANT AID SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BUT GOG SHOULD NOT FFER
CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE AND SUCH AID SHOULD BE "WITHOUT
INTERVENTION OF AMERICANS IN INTERNAL AFFIARS OF GREECE."

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES ON THIS SUBJECT, EMBASSY PRESS
OFFICER HAS STATED INFORMALLY THAT EMBASSY
HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON THIS MATTER. HE HAS ADDED THAT ANY
ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE IN U.S./GREEK MILITAY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP
WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM GREEK GOVERNMENT AND THAT, AS MINISTER
OF DEFENSE INDICATED, THIS IS SUBJECT AMONG OTHERS TO BE
DISCUSSED IN NEAR FUTURE IN GREEK PARLIAMENT.
KUBISCH

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